

Turkey strengthens its Customs risk management system

FOR SOME TIME now, Turkey has been seeking to strengthen its risk management and analysis system which it established in 2008 with a view to making its Customs control operations at sea ports, airports, land borders and inland more effective.

Recently, the Ministry of Customs and Trade (MoCT), an entity established in 2011 by merging the Undersecretariat of Customs with the Ministry of Trade, implemented a twinning arrangement with the German and United Kingdom Customs administrations focused on improving the evaluation, information and risk assessment abilities of Turkish Customs.

The twinning project, entitled “Modernization of the Turkish Customs Administration VI – Risk Management”, ran for a little over one year, from 1 February 2012 to 22 February 2013. Its aim was to improve the ability of Customs officers to curb illicit trade in commercial goods, as well as narcotics and explosives, in order to secure a potential future external border of the European Union (EU) and to ensure that Turkish Customs is in a position to fulfil the tasks and obligations of an EU-compatible Customs administration.

Turkey’s automated risk analysis system categorizes transactions on the basis of high-, medium- and low-risk scores, which takes a trader’s compliance history into account, for example its Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) status. The system enables the MoCT to carry out risk-based controls, primarily with a view to targeting high-risk shipments on the basis of

pre-arrival messages before they arrive in Turkey, thereby facilitating Turkish ambitions for the country to become a major player in the global economy.

Risk management and analysis operations are carried out centrally by the Risk Analysis Department of the Directorate-General for Risk Management and Control. Regional risk analysis is carried out by Risk Analysis Units which were established at 16 Regional Directorates in 2012. Local risk analysis activities are also performed by trained staff at Customs offices, on the basis of local issues and considerations. Under the project, all Customs personnel involved in risk analysis were given training with a particular focus on declarations, summary declarations, fast parcel operators, the EU’s New Computerised Transit System (NCTS), simplified procedures and data mining.

Twelve workshops and 38 seminars were held in Turkey, with 727 Customs officials from the central and local Customs offices participating. In addition, 35 Customs officers went on study visits and undertook traineeships in Germany and the United Kingdom, while 16 staff members attended train-the-trainer courses on new training methods and approaches in teaching Customs techniques.

A “Business Strategy” and “Risk Analysis Guideline” have also been produced. The Risk Analysis Guideline explains how to carry out risk analysis and, in particular, identify relevant data so that it may be used to analyse and target suspect con-

signments. It also includes examples of analyses and seizures made. Turkish Customs did not merely review and update its risk management system; the project also enabled it to implement a new organizational structure for the risk management system at regional level.

Five of the activities that took place during the project were aimed at introducing simplified procedures in Turkey that are already applied in Germany and the United Kingdom. While project activities were under way, a new Customs Code entered into force on 10 January 2013 which covers concepts such as the authorized trader, local clearance and authorized consignee and consignee, thereby ensuring that the Code is compatible with that of the EU.

The new Code was officially unveiled to traders in Istanbul in January this year in the presence of more than 500 delegates representing companies, stakeholders, trade associations and the MoCT. The Ministry also held seminars in cities with large foreign trade volumes, in order to inform traders about the implementation of a new AEO programme. Not only will Turkey continue to reach out to its trading community, it will also continue to improve its risk analysis activities as part of the recent reorganization of its Customs administration, in order to become a country where trade transactions take place with optimum security, speed and ease.

More information

A.Toksoz@gtb.gov.tr

M.Duran@gtb.gov.tr